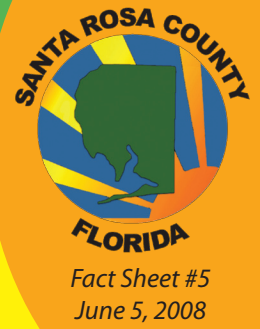
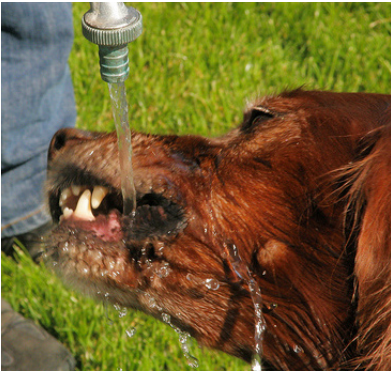


Your County, Your Government



Protecting Your Pets From Summer Heat



As we begin to experience extreme temperatures, don't forget that the heat also affects your pets. Santa Rosa County Animal Services recommends all pet owners follow these simple steps outlined by Pets America, an emergency preparedness and disaster relief resource for pet owners:

- ! **Never leave an animal in a parked car.** When it's only 80 degrees outside, the inside of a car can heat up to 120 degrees or more in just minutes. Leaving the windows partially rolled down won't cool it much.
- ! Keep animals out of direct sunlight during the heat of the day - roughly 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dogs can only regulate their body temperature by panting and by a tiny amount of evaporation of sweat through the pads of their feet. Heatstroke can occur and lead to brain damage or death. The old, very young and certain breeds can have an especially difficult time with the heat. Long-haired breeds may need a summer trim to keep cool. Know the signs of heat stroke. For dogs, signs include excessive panting, drooling, rapid pulse and fever. Immediately run cool (not ice cold) water over the animal and wrap with cool towels before taking your pet to the veterinarian. Ice cubes can help rehydrate the dog if he will lick them. Panting in cats is not normal; if it lasts more than a few minutes, it can be a sign of distress.
- ! Animals can get sunburned too - especially short-haired dogs or dogs and cats with pink skin and white hair. Limit your pet's exposure when the sun is unusually strong and ask your veterinarian about using sun block. Non-irritating zinc oxide is one that can be applied to the ears and nose 30 minutes before going outside.
- ! Make sure animals have access to fresh water and shade. Spraying down a favorite shaded area with water a few times a day can help keep it cool. For outdoor dogs, try filling a kiddie pool with water and leaving it in the shade but be sure to change the water often so you don't invite mosquitoes. Pets that are tied or tethered outside may knock over their water source. To prevent this, owners can dig a hole in the ground, place the bucket or bowl in the hole, and fill with fresh water daily

! Avoid strenuous exercise with your dog on extremely hot days and do not exercise during the intense, mid-day heat. In hot climates, veterinarians recommend limiting activity to the early morning or late evening, about an hour after the sun has gone down. Bring along water and make frequent stops to allow your dog to rest and drink, and keep activity to 20 minutes or less.

! Test hot surfaces where your animals will stand. Pavement that's too hot for you to stand on in bare feet will be too hot for their sensitive foot pads - the same goes for a hot metal truck bed or other metal surfaces.



! Cats exhibit many of the same symptoms as dogs when stressed by the heat. Early signs of heat stroke can be panting that lasts more than a few minutes, anxiety and pacing, increased heartbeat, respiratory distress or hyperventilation, lethargy, and an increased body temperature. Oddly enough, cats affected by heat may actually drink less when they should be drinking more. Add ice cubes to their water bowl, or encourage them to drink by dabbing a little water at the corner of his or her mouth.

For more information on pet safety, visit <http://petsamerica.org>.

About Santa Rosa County Animal Services

Animal services operates the county's animal shelter and enforces county animal control ordinances. The shelter and offices are open to the public Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Citizens with questions or who would like to report an animal issue are encouraged to call (850) 983-4680 during business hours or (850) 983-5372 for after hour *emergencies*.

Stray/lost pets

Anytime a resident loses a pet, they are urged to contact Santa Rosa County Animal Services immediately. By calling the shelter, the owner's pet information will be placed in the lost/stray animal log book used by staff to reunite pets with their owners. The public can also search for their lost pet on the county's website 24-hours a day, at <http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/animals/straylostpets.html>. The database includes information and photos of all animals currently being held in the stray/lost pet section of the shelter.

Adoptions

Over 70 percent of the animals received by Santa Rosa Animal Services are euthanized each year. There are many animals available that would make wonderful family pets and desperately need responsible and loving homes. You can also view adoptable animals on the web at: <http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/animals/index.html>.

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